

House Republican Press Release

August 29, 2005
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Governor Rell Demonstrates Leadership



By State Representative John J. Ryan

By now it is old news that the BRAC voted overwhelmingly not to close the Groton Sub Base, and blood pressure scores in Eastern Connecticut must be down considerably! But I am not going to use this space to rehash how important this news is, or to try to take some credit for what happened, or to pretend that I have any idea why the Pentagon made their decision in the first place. Rather, I am more interested in some observations about process that has just occurred.

Do you remember all of the political experts opining that saving the Sub Base was an almost hopeless cause? After all, Connecticut was not a "red state" in the recent Presidential elections, Senators Dodd and Lieberman are members of the minority party in the Senate, Southern states like Georgia and Virginia had much more political "juice", the Sub Base had used up many of its 9 lives by having been bailed out before, etc. etc., so what happened? By all accounts, it was Governor M. Jodi Rell was the one who took charge of the situation .

As one party who was actively involved has stated, Rell set up and headed up meetings to organize a coordinated effort, communicated with everyone involved, and clearly was "in command." One might think that the smart political decision could have been for Rell to NOT get actively involved, and not waste political capital on an unpromising cause, and instead blame the two Senators in the minority party, but Rell would have none of this. Instead, she chose to ignore the political odds, and without histrionics or fanfare, calmly and quietly started working . So what is the lesson here? Clearly, Governor Rell is less interested in politics, and more interested in results.

And how did these results occur? Was there a press conference called every day? Do you recall much in the way of posturing, threats or grandstanding? By all accounts there was a great deal of background work, researching, behind-the-scenes meetings and coordinating and quiet strategizing. (My guess is that the press hated that there was not more visible "action" going on). In other words, there seemed to be very little flash or splash, just steady, effective, bi-partisan hard work.

What about when the good news came in? Did Governor Rell knock everyone else out of the way in taking credit, or did she graciously thank everyone involved for their effort on

the 'team'? Did she even utter that popular political pronoun "I" or did she repeatedly mention that "we did it"? Perhaps even more telling, after this very large success, did Rell rest on her laurels and take a pass on the next problem that came up? Wouldn't another elected official, after the Groton success, have gone on a political vacation? No, when the news of the Bradley Air National Guard base closure promptly followed, while it would have been understandable to take the position that "Look folks, let's keep this in perspective; we just had a big win with Groton, we can't expect to keep the Bradley planes also!"; Rell instead chose to tackle this next issue head-on, and announce that the State would file suit to keep its Air National Guard squadron .

Is the picture becoming clear of Rell's approach as she is now early in her second year of service as Governor? Is there any wonder why her approval ratings are so amazingly high?

In our last column, I suggested some "audience participation" on the newly enacted Connecticut Estate Tax, and how it is affecting your personal financial planning. I have some interesting responses, and please keep sending your comments in!

Please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at John.Ryan@housegop.state.ct.us or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.